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DESCRIPTION OF THE PICTURE

PAINTED BY P. J. DE LOUTHERBOURG, Esq. R. A.

REPRESENTING

THE TERRIFIC GRANDEUR OF THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON;

Which is now Exhibiting at the HISTORIC GALLERY, PALL MALL, in a Manner perfectly new, by Means of an Optical Illusion.

The Exhibition is open from Twelve till Five.—Admittance ONE SHILLING.

THERE is scarcely any domestic event recorded in history so much calculated to engage the attention of Englishmen as the FIRE OF LONDON, whether we consider its immediate effects, or its remote consequences. The mind cannot without difficulty form any tolerably adequate conception of a resistless conflagration spreading for the space of six days over an extent of ground nearly a mile and half in length, and above half a mile in breadth, and involving in one indiscriminate mass of ruins all the public and private edifices of every description crowded together on 400 acres of land: a conflagration by which were destroyed 13,200 houses, 162 churches and other public structures, and in which property to the value of ten millions and half is computed to have perished.

Yet this dreadful calamity may with justice be considered as one of the providential events occurring in the general order of things, by which permanent and extensive good is educed from partial and temporary evil; for, great as was the destruction, and much as individuals suffered by it, its consequences were evidently beneficial, and the seeds of all our subsequent improvements were then sown. The city was rebuilt with many precautions for the prevention of a similar calamity, wooden houses began to disappear, several streets were enlarged, a general predilection for wider avenues was roused, and the temper of mind thus excited gave birth to the open and airy style of building which has generally prevailed in the additions that have since been made to the capital. Thus posterity has reaped ample benefits in health, convenience, and safety. Such a fire can never again occur by accident; and since that period the plague, the ravages of which have heretofore been so dreadful, has remained unknown in this country.

Of this event, forming one of the sublimest spectacles that can be imagined, the pencil alone can give a lively representation: and the pencil itself, employed in the usual mode, is hardly equal to the desired purpose. The collateral assistance of art, therefore, has been called in on the present occasion: aided by which, the spectator may almost imagine himself actually contemplating at a distance the tremendous scene.

The point of view of this Picture Mr. LOUTHERBOURG has taken from the last arch of old London Bridge on the Surry side of the Thames, towards the city of London, as in that angle old St. Paul's comes in as a most conspicuous part lighted by that dreadful conflagration, which, by the strong easterly wind, then blowing most vehemently, is approaching rapidly with its destructive flames toward this once noble building.—This object of old St. Paul's is a proper mark of the city of London, and a curious relique of that ancient edifice.

The arch of old London Bridge, judiciously chosen by Mr. LOUTHERBOURG as a fore-ground to his picture, gives it at once novelty, grandeur, and a strong effect is produced by the contrast of the shade of the arch with the inflamed atmosphere of the sky, in opposition to the coolness of the silvery moon, peeping from behind clouds, receiving at once the tints of this luminary, and those of the conflagration of the vast city beneath. Of all these, as well as of the reflection of the water, this arch is beautifully participating, and by the dimensions of its structure, opposed to the figures, and the distant barges, and edifices of the town on fire, adds a scale of grandeur and magnificent solemnity, which otherwise the artist could never have contrived.

And to this advantage muſt be added, that the pier of wooden piles of the old London Bridge gave Mr. LOUTHERBOURG the happy opportunity of landing upon that temporary aſylum, ſuch intereſting groupes of unhappy ſufferers, as ſo dreadful, ſudden, and unexpected calamity, in the night time, muſt of neceſſity have brought there; women of all ranks mingled by miſery; parents and children oppreſſed by age and ſickneſs, juſt ſaved from the flames, among furniture of all ſorts in confuſion; men aſſiſting, and aſtoniſhed though leſs ſuffering ſpectators, on various plans; whilſt boats and other ſmall craft full of goods, and the remnants of poor families, compoſe this buſy and moſt feelingly intereſting groupe of figures, partly lighted by the reflecting fire, and partly by the pallid rays of the moon, and their reflection in the water.

The ſecond plan is enriched with large barges on the oppoſite ſide of the city of London; their ſails and rigging reflecting the fire, and the moon's full ſilvery image in the front of the water, giving a contraſt to that part of the picture, at once beautiful, and highly difficult to manage on canvas.

The buſtle and confuſion in theſe barges of unfortunate ſufferers ſaving their little property, and on the city ſhore, boats filled with people aſſiſting to extinguiſh or reſiſt the ſpreading calamity, the different tints of the devouring flames conſuming the once wealthy city, and the freſh and ſpreading fire taking hold in ſeveral places, produce the moſt awful and wonderfully intereſting effect, aided by the ſmoke and immenſe maſs of volcanic clouds, beautifully varied in their colouring, which are ſeen apparently aſcending toward the moon.

This whole compoſition together forms as grand, ſolemn, and terrific a ſpectacle as human miſery could ever preſent at one view to the eyes of man.

The firſt building juſt behind the groupe on the piers of the bridge is Cole-harbour. There the fire is in its full vigour, and the flames are communicating from room to room. The next ſpace, the Steelyard, is filled with people aſſiſting to impede the ſpreading of the conflagration. The wharf near the barges is Queenhithe, where the wet ſmoke and the freſh breaking out flames, over which, through immenſe columns of ſmoke, old St. Paul's majeſtically ſtands as yet uninjured, and receiving the full reflection of the city in conflagration, upon a gloomy and inflamed horizon, terminates the awful ſcene.

MR. BOWYER begs leave to acquaint the Public that

A PRINT

IS NOW ENGRAVING FROM THIS PICTURE,

AND AS THE SPLENDID EFFECT OF REPRESENTATIONS OF THIS NATURE CANNOT BE GIVEN IN AN UNCOLOURED PRINT, IT IS DETERMINED THAT

EACH IMPRESSION SHALL BE PAINTED IN WATER COLOURS

FROM THE ORIGINAL PICTURE.

The ſize of the Print 31½ inches by 25 inches.

The price to Subſcribers THREE GUINEAS. ONE GUINEA to be paid at the time of ſubſcribing, and the remainder on the delivery of the Print, which will certainly appear early in the next ſeaſon.

THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA.

Mr. LOUTHERBOURG's Picture of this ſubject, and which is the ſame ſize as the FIRE OF LONDON, is now exhibiting in the Gallery above Stairs, without any additional expence of admittance.

The Prints painted in Water Colours from the above Picture, will be ready for delivery in ten days.

CATALOGUE OF PICTURES,

PAINTED FOR

Mr. BOWYER'S MAGNIFICENT EDITION

OF THE

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

N° 1.

The Submiſſion of John to his Brother, Richard I.

Painted by B. WEST, *Hiſtorical Painter to his Majeſty, and Preſident of the Royal Academy.*

" DURING this war Prince John deſerted from Philip, threw himſelf at his brother's feet, craved pardon for his offences, and, by the intercemon of Queen Eleanor, was received into favour.—*I forgive him*, ſaid the King, *and hope I ſhall as eaſily forget his injuries as he will my pardon.*"—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. II. p.* 31, *oct. edit.*

N° 2.

The Holy Maid of Kent.

Painted by H. TRESHAM, *A.*

" Maſters aſſociated with him Dr. Bocking, a Canon of Canterbury, and their deſign was to raiſe the credit of an image of the Virgin, which ſtood in a chapel belonging to Maſters, and to draw to it ſuch pilgrimages as uſually frequented the more famous images and relics. In proſecution of this deſign, Elizabeth pretended revelations which directed her to have recourſe to that image for a cure; and being brought before it in the preſence of a great multitude, ſhe fell anew into convulſions, and after diſtorting her limbs and countenance during a competent time, ſhe affected to have obtained a perfect recovery by the interceſſion of the Virgin."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. IV. p.* 135, *oct. edit.*

N° 3.

Mary Queen of Scots making her Eſcape from Lochlevin Caſtle.

Painted by R. SMIRKE, *R. A.*

" While theſe humours were in fermentation, Mary was employed in contrivances for effecting her eſcape; and ſhe engaged, by her charms and careſſes, a young gentleman, George Douglas, brother to the laird of Lochlevin, to aſſiſt her in that enterpriſe. She even went ſo far as to give him hopes of eſpouſing her, after her marriage with Bothwel ſhould be diſſolved on the plea of force; and ſhe propoſed this expedient to the regent, who rejected it. Douglas, however, perſevered in his endeavours to free her from captivity; and having all opportunities of acceſs to the houſe, he was at laſt ſucceſsful in the undertaking. He conveyed her in diſguiſe into a ſmall boat, and himſelf rowed her aſhore."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. V. p.* 126, *oct. edit.*

N° 4.

The Earl of Sandwich refuſing to quit his Ship when it had been ſet on Fire in the Battle of Solebay.

Painted by R. SMIRKE, *R. A.*

" He himſelf meanwhile ruſhed into battle with the Hollanders; and, by preſenting himſelf to every danger, had drawn upon him all the braveſt of the enemy. He killed Van Ghent, a Dutch admiral, and beat off his ſhip; he ſunk another ſhip, which ventured to lay him aboard; he ſunk three fire-ſhips which endeavoured to grapple with him; and though his veſſel was torn in pieces with ſhot, and of a thouſand men ſhe contained near ſix hundred were killed, he continued ſtill to thunder with all his artillery in the midſt of the enemy. But another fire-ſhip, more fortunate than the preceding, having laid hold of his veſſel, her deſtruction was now inevitable. Warned by Sir Edward Haddock, his captain, he refuſed to make his eſcape, and bravely embraced death as a ſhelter from that ignominy which a raſh expreſſion of the Duke of York he thought had thrown upon him."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. VII. p.* 485, *oct. edit.*

N° 5.

Lady Jane Grey ſolicited to accept the Crown.

Painted by R. SMIRKE, *R. A.*

" Her heart full of this paſſion for literature and the elegant arts, and of tenderneſs towards her huſband, who was deſerving of her affections, had never opened itſelf to the flattering allurements of ambition; and the intelligence of her elevation to the throne was nowiſe agreeable to her. *She even refuſed to accept of the preſent*; pleaded the preferable title of the two princeſſes, expreſſed her dread of the conſequences attending an enterpriſe ſo dangerous, not to ſay criminal; and deſired to remain in the private ſtation in which ſhe was born."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. IV. p.* 369, *oct. edit.*

N° 6.

Boadicea haranguing the Britons.

Painted by J. OPIE, *R. A.*

" The Britons, taking advantage of the abſence of Suetonius, were all in arms, and headed by Boadicea queen of the Iceni, *who had been treated in the moſt ignominious manner* by the Roman tribunes, had already attacked with ſucceſs ſeveral ſettlements of their inſulting conquerors."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. I. page* 8.

N° 7.

The Duke of York, Brother to Edward the Fifth, reſigned by the Queen.

Painted by J. OPIE, *R. A.*

" The Archbiſhops of Canterbury and York employed every argument, accompanied with earneſt entreaties, exhortations, and aſſurances, to bring her over to the ſame opinion. She long continued obſtinate, and inſiſted that the Duke of York, by living in the ſanctuary, was not only ſecure himſelf, but gave ſecurity to the king, whoſe life no one would dare to attempt, while his ſucceſſor and avenger remained in ſafety. But finding that none ſupported her in theſe ſentiments, and that force, in caſe of refuſal, was threatened by the council, ſhe at laſt complied, and produced her ſon to the two prelates. She was here on a ſudden ſtruck with a kind of preſage of his future ſtate: ſhe tenderly embraced him; ſhe bedewed him with tears; and, bidding him an eternal adieu, delivered him, with many expreſſions of regret and reluctance, into their cuſtody."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. III. p.* 271, *oct. edit.*

N° 8.

Mary Queen of Scots previous to her Execution.

Painted by J. OPIE, *R. A.*

" Her ſervants ſeeing her in this condition, ready to lay her head upon the block, burſt into tears and lamentations; and an attendant covered her eyes with a handkerchief."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. V. p.* 319, *oct. edit.*

N° 9.

The Seizing of Mortimer.

Painted by J. OPIE, *R. A.*

" The caſtle of Nottingham was choſen for the ſcene of the enterpriſe. The queen-dowager and Mortimer lodged in that fortreſs: the king alſo was admitted, though with a few only of his attendants: and as the caſtle was ſtrictly guarded, the gates locked every evening, and the keys carried to the queen, it became neceſſary to communicate the deſign to Sir William Eland, the governor, who zealouſly took part in it. By his direction the king's aſſociates were admitted through a ſubterraneous paſſage, which had formerly been contrived for a ſecret outlet from the caſtle, but was now buried in rubbiſh; and Mortimer, without having it in his power to make reſiſtance, was ſuddenly ſeized in an apartment adjoining to the queen's."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. II. p.* 378, *oct. edit.*

N° 10.

Mary, Queen of James the Second, quitting the Kingdom.

Painted by J. OPIE, *R. A.*

Although Hume did not conſider it neceſſary to his narrative to mention this circumſtance, the particular manner of the Queen's departure has been deſcribed by other writers of credit; and therefore, being an admitted fact, the publiſher was happy in having an opportunity to introduce an additional illuſtration of the Engliſh Hiſtory, by what he flatters himſelf will be deemed an honourable example of Engliſh art.

N° 11.

Joan of Arc declaring her Miſſion.

Painted by J. OPIE, *R. A.*

" An aſſembly of grave doctors and theologians cautiouſly examined Joan's miſſion, and pronounced it undoubted and ſupernatural."

N° 12.

The Death of Sir Philip Sidney.

Painted by J. F. RIGAUD, *R. A.*

" After this laſt action, while he was lying on the field mangled with wounds, a bottle of water was brought to him to relieve his thirſt; but, obſerving a ſoldier near him in a like miſerable condition, he ſaid, *This man's neceſſity is ſtill greater than mine*; and reſigned to him the bottle of water. The King of Scots, ſtruck with admiration of Sidney's virtue, celebrated his memory in a copy of Latin verſes which he compoſed on the death of that young hero."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. V. p.* 276, *oct. edit.*

N° 13.

Prince William, Son of Henry the Firſt, endeavouring to ſave his Siſter, the Counteſs of Perche.

Painted by J. F. RIGAUD, *R. A.*

" William was put into the long-boat, and had got clear of the ſhip, when hearing the cries of his natural ſiſter, the Counteſs of Perche, he ordered the ſeamen to row back, in hopes of ſaving her; the numbers who then crowded in ſoon ſunk the boat, and the prince, with all his retinue, periſhed. Above a hundred and forty young noblemen of the principal families of England and Normandy were loſt on this occaſion. A butcher of Rouen was the only perſon on board who eſcaped; he clung to the maſt, and was taken up next morning by fiſhermen."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. I. p.* 338, *oct. edit.*

N° 14.

Edwy and Elgiva inſulted by Dunſtan.

Painted by W. HAMILTON, *R. A.*

" On the day of Edwy's coronation his nobility were aſſembled in a great hall, and were indulging themſelves in that riot and diſorder which, from the example of their German anceſtors, had become habitual to the Engliſh; when Edwy, attracted by ſofter pleaſures, retired into the queen's apartment, and in that privacy gave range to his fondneſs towards his wife, which was only moderately checked by the preſence of her mother. Dunſtan conjectured the reaſon of the king's retreat; and carrying along with him Odo, Archbiſhop of Canterbury, over whom he had gained an abſolute aſcendant, he burſt into the apartment, upbraided Edwy with his laſciviouſneſs, probably beſtowed on the queen the moſt opprobious epithet that can be applied to her ſex, and, tearing him from her arms, puſhed him back in a diſgraceful manner into the banquet of the nobles."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. I. p.* 116, *oct. edit.*

N° 15.

The Death of Prince Arthur.

Painted by W. HAMILTON, *R. A.*

" John removed Arthur to the Caſtle of Rouen; and, coming in a boat during the night-time to that place, commanded Arthur to be brought forth to him. The young prince, aware of his danger, and now more ſubdued by the continuance of his misfortunes, and by the approach of death, threw himſelf on his knees before his uncle, and begged for mercy: but the barbarous tyrant, making no reply, ſtabbed him with his own hands, and faſtening a ſtone to the dead body, threw it into the Seine."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. II. p.* 47, *oct. edit.*

N° 16.

Rowena introduced to Vortigern, King of the Britons.

Painted by W. HAMILTON, *R. A.*

Mr. Hume thought it unneceſſary to his Hiſtory to deſcribe this interview; but Rapin mentions the following particulars reſpecting that circumſtance:

" Hengiſt perceiving with joy the ſudden effect of Rowena's charms upon Vortigern, is unwilling to give his growing paſſion time to cool. He makes a ſign to his niece, who immediately going to the ſide-board, fills a gold cup with wine, and preſents it to the king, ſaying, in her language, " Dear king, your health." Vortigern, agreeably ſurpriſed, turns to his interpreter, and aſks what ſhe ſaid, and how he muſt anſwer after the Saxon manner. Being informed, he looks very amorouſly on Rowena, and anſwers in Saxon, Drink heal, that is, *Do yourſelf drink the health.* Whereupon Rowena, juſt putting the cup to her lips, preſents it to the king, who taking it, riſes up immediately and gives her a ſalute. Rowena receives it in a very reſpectful manner, as ſenſible of the great honour done her, and, making a profound reverence, withdraws, leaving the monarch full of love and deſire."—*Vide* RAPIN, *folio edit. Vol. I. p.* 32.

N° 17.

Saint Auguſtine preaching to Ethelbert, King of Kent.

Painted by H. TRESHAM, *A.*

" Auguſtine on his arrival in Kent, in the year 597, found the danger much leſs than he had apprehended. Ethelbert, already well diſpoſed towards the Chriſtian faith, aſſigned him a habitation in the iſle of Thanet, and ſoon after admitted him to a conference. Apprehenſive, however, leſt ſpells or enchantments might be employed againſt him by prieſts, who brought an unknown worſhip from a diſtant country, he had the precaution to receive them in the open air, where he believed the force of their magic would be more eaſily diſſipated. Here Auguſtine, by means of his interpreters, delivered to him the tenets of the Chriſtian faith, and promiſed him eternal joys above, and a kingdom in heaven without end, if he would be perſuaded to receive that ſalutary doctrine. " Your words and promiſes," replied Ethelbert, " are fair; but, becauſe they are new and uncertain, I cannot entirely yield to them, and relinquiſh the principles which I and my anceſtors have ſo long maintained. You are welcome, however, to remain here in peace; and as you have undertaken ſo long a journey, ſolely, as it appears, for what you believe to be for our advantage, I will ſupply you with all neceſſaries, and permit you to deliver your doctrine to my ſubjects."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. I. p.* 34, *oct. edit.*

N° 18.

Alfred receiving the Royal Unction from Pope Leo the Third.

Painted by R. WESTALL, *R. A.*

" This Prince gave very early marks of thoſe great virtues and ſhining talents, by which, during the moſt difficult times, he ſaved his country from utter ruin and ſubverſion. Ethelwolf, his father, the year after his return with Alfred from Rome, had again ſent the young Prince thither with a numerous retinue: and a report being ſpread of the King's death, *the Pope Leo III. gave Alfred the royal unction*; whether prognoſticating his future greatneſs from the appearances of his pregnant genius, or willing to pretend, even in that age, to the right of conferring kingdoms."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. I. p.* 76, *oct. edit.*

N° 19.

Charles the Firſt with two of his Children previous to his Death.

Painted by T. STOTHARD, *R. A.*

" To the young Duke, too, he could not forbear giving ſome advice, in order to ſeaſon his mind with early principles of loyalty and obedience towards his brother, who was ſo ſoon to be his ſovereign. Holding him on his knee, he ſaid, " Now they will cut off thy father's head." At theſe words the child looked very ſtedfaſtly upon him. " Mark, child! what I ſay: they will cut off my head! and perhaps make thee a king: but mark what I ſay, thou muſt not be a king, as long as thy brothers Charles and James are alive. They will cut off thy brothers' heads when they can catch them! And thy head too they will cut off at laſt! Therefore, I charge thee, do not be made a king by them!" The Duke, ſighing, replied, " I will be torn in pieces firſt!" So determined an anſwer, from one of ſuch tender years, filled the King's eyes with tears of joy and admiration."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. VII. p.* 142, *oct. edit.*

N° 20.

Alfred in the Houſe of the Neatherd.

Painted by F. WHEATLEY, *R. A.*

" The wife of the neatherd was ignorant of the perſon and condition of her royal gueſt; and obſerving him one day buſy by the fire-ſide in trimming his bow and arrows, ſhe deſired him to take care of ſome cakes which were toaſting, while ſhe was employed elſewhere in other domeſtic affairs. But Alfred, whoſe thoughts were otherwiſe engaged, neglected this injunction; and the good woman, on her return, finding her cakes all burnt, rated the King very ſeverely, and upbraided him that he always ſeemed very well pleaſed to eat her warm cakes, though he was thus negligent in toaſting them."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. I. p.* 80, *oct. edit.*

N° 21.

The Death of Richard the Second.

Painted by F. WHEATLEY, *R. A.*

" Hiſtorians differ reſpecting the manner in which he was murdered. It was the prevailing opinion that Sir Piers Exton, with others of his guards, fell upon him in the caſtle of Pomfret, where he was confined, and diſpatched him."—*Vide* HUME, *Vol. III. p. 49, oct. edit.*

PORTRAITS.

N° 22, 23, 24,

Are three exquiſite Portraits, painted by CORNELIUS JANSSEN, and are undoubtedly original Pictures: they are three children of Charles I.

N° 22.

Is Charles Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles II.

N° 23.

Is Mary Princeſs of Orange. And

N° 24.

Is James Duke of York; afterwards James II.

SKETCH OF MR. BOWYER'S PROSPECTUS.

Sixty large Pictures will be painted from the moſt intereſting events in the Britiſh Hiſtory.

The Prints from thoſe Pictures, as well as every other Embelliſhment of the Work, will be executed in the ſame ſtyle of engraving as the celebrated Prints of the Death of General Wolfe, and the Battles of the Boyne and La Hogue.

All the firſt Artiſts in the Country have undertaken to exert their abilities in the Embelliſhments of this Work.

The whole Hiſtory will be publiſhed, as nearly as can be computed, in Sixty Numbers, making Six magnificent Folio Volumes. Each Number will contain one Capital Hiſtoric Print, with one or more Vignettes, Portraits, Views of Naval Engagements, Monuments, Ruins, Coins, or Medals, as the ſubject may require.

The Price to Subſcribers is One Guinea each Number; and, in order to remove every poſſibility of doubt reſpecting the equitable and fair delivery of the Impreſſions of the Plates according to the order of ſubſcription, ſuch an engagement is given as will effectually anſwer that purpoſe.

PROPOSALS, containing an account of the various Embelliſhments which are to appear in this Work (moſt of which are in their nature perfectly new), together with the names of the Artiſts engaged, and every other particular relating to this Undertaking, may be had at the HISTORIC GALLERY; and of J. EDWARDS, Pall-Mall; alſo of W. RICHARDSON, Royal Exchange; where the Numbers, already publiſhed, may be inſpected.

Thoſe who may wiſh to become SUBSCRIBERS to this Work, may have thoſe Numbers which are already out, delivered at any periods they may think proper.